

CABBAGES AND RELATED CROPS



THE cabbage family can provide food from the garden in all seasons of the year—highly nutritious food, particularly rich in protective vitamins.

CABBAGES

The cabbage is a crop of general utility, for unless the ground is wanted for another crop the plants go on producing useful greens.

For Spring and Early Summer Cutting

Early Offenham, *Wheeler's Imperial* and *Ellam's Early* are suitable either for cutting when the plants are semi-hearted or when solid hearts have developed.

Flower of Spring is a later variety, making a large plant. It can, however, be cut as spring greens.

For Late Summer and Autumn Cutting

Winnigstadt is a good late summer cabbage. *Primo*, which is of dwarf habit, making few outer leaves and developing solid, round-shaped heads, can be planted closer together in the rows than some types.

Stockley's Giant Red is excellent for pickling purposes. Red cabbages are the most suitable for pickling, but can also be eaten as a fresh vegetable.

For Winter Cutting

January King and *Christmas Drumhead* are hardy types.

SAVOYS

Best of All is grown for cutting in early winter, and *Ormskirk Late* is suitable for cutting in March and April. Savoys are very hardy, with curled and puckered leaves. On account of their flavour they are often preferred to cabbages. They should be grown for late winter use.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

This crop is the chief source of supply of fresh, green food for late autumn and winter. When arranging a plan of cropping for the garden, space should be allowed to accommodate a fair-sized plot of sprouts.

It is important to remember that the plants require a long season of growth to develop properly.

Although there are many varieties, a good mid-season type will suffice. Either *Harrison's XXX* or *Evesham Giant* will be suitable, but for

persons with very limited space a more compact sort such as *Rous Lench* or *Dwarf Gem* is to be preferred.

BROCCOLI

There are two distinct types of broccoli, (a) those which produce a "head" or "curd", and (b) a sprouting form which gives edible flowering shoots.

The "heading" or "curd" forming broccoli are not so hardy as the sprouting type, are more difficult on land which is poor in plant food, and should not be grown except in warm districts.

Three varieties are, however, worthy of trial. These are *Early Feltham*, a hardy, well protected variety which matures during the late January and early February period; *Leamington*, which is fairly hardy and ready for cutting in March; and *St. George*, for large "heads" or "curds" for April consumption.

There are early, mid-season and late sorts of Sprouting Broccoli in both the purple and white groups. Many gardeners prefer the purple strain. A few plants only will be needed, because, after the first cutting, fresh shoots are made and these will provide further supplies of food for use at a later date.

CAULIFLOWERS

This crop provides supplies in summer and autumn, and although there are numerous varieties, three only are required for growing in small gardens.

"*All the Year Round*" makes a dwarf plant with a medium-sized "head" or "curd." Its period for cutting is largely dependent upon the time when the seed is sown, but from

seed sown in the open ground in March curds are ready for use in late July and August. *Eclipse* is a later variety, making larger leaves and "head" than the former. *Veitch's Autumn Giant* is suitable for consumption in late September and October, but seed of this type is now difficult to obtain.

Cauliflowers give best results in districts where extremely hot summers and dry soil are not experienced, and in soils which have been dug deeply and enriched with manure. If these conditions are not possible, it is a waste of time and space to attempt this crop.

KALES

The kales, sometimes known as Borecole, are extremely hardy and will grow well on soils which have not been so well prepared as for some of the other cabbage crops. They will suffer from frost, but unless this is very severe they rapidly recover when warmer conditions prevail. The edible parts can be cut for consumption over a long period in winter. They are not so susceptible to "club root" disease as other vegetables.

There are tall and dwarf kinds, the latter being very suitable for planting in small plots, because the plants do not require wide spacing.

The top part of the plant is first cut for consumption and provides a good deal of green food. The stem also pushes out short edible shoots which are picked off in much the same way as sprouting broccoli. After the first picking of the side shoots, other shoots will develop or grow and provide further supplies. This condition will continue until late April and May when the shoots develop flowers and the plants become unsuitable as a source of food.

There are several different kinds of kale and the two recommended for growing in small gardens are :—

Dwarf Green Curled. This sort takes up very little space. It is

suitable for cutting in the winter and has an excellent flavour.

Cottagers Kale. This variety is a strong grower attaining a height of 2½ ft. and for this reason will require more space between the rows.

HOW TO RAISE THE PLANTS

Many growers will require only a few plants of each kind and will be able to purchase the small supply needed without difficulty. Others gain much pleasure in raising the plants from seed. A small piece of ground is used as a seedbed. This should be chosen carefully, for seedlings grow weakly and become drawn if overshadowed by trees or hedges.

The soil should be fairly rich, and if poor should be given a dressing of material from the compost heap, or dung if it is available. A small quantity of superphosphate may also be applied when the soil is being dug, at the rate of 2 oz. per square yard.

Towards the end of February, the seedbed needs further attention if the soil is reasonably dry, but if wet or heavy it may be necessary to defer the final operation until early March. The necessary work is the firming of the soil by treading over it, levelling by using an iron rake, and creating a fine texture or tilth on the surface.

The seed is sown in drills 1 ft. apart and 1½-2 in. deep, from the third week in March to the end of April. Space the seeds in the drill, for crowded seedlings cannot develop into strong, healthy plants. Allow a

space of ½ in. between each seed in the drill. Cover up the drills with a rake and make the soil finally firm by pressing it with the back of the spade. Mark the position of each variety with a wooden label.

Seeds of Brussels sprouts and cauliflowers are sown first, followed by broccoli (sprouting and heading), then late summer and autumn cabbage and the kales, and lastly, the winter cabbage and savoys. To secure plants of Brussels Sprouts early, it is often necessary to sow under glass or in a frame. Red cabbage and spring cutting cabbage are sown in late July and early August, and transplanted from mid-September to mid-October. A small packet of seed, one-sixteenth of an ounce, is sufficient in all cases. A plot 6 ft. by 4 ft. is large enough for a seedbed.

Protect the seeds from birds, using black cotton, or wire guards may be placed over the drills. Flea beetles are a pest in most seasons, but dusting over the seedlings as they grow with derris or nicotine powder will control this pest.

Slugs may also be a nuisance, but a few small heaps of "Meta" mixed with bran scattered about the seedbed will destroy these.

PLANTING

All the crops except Brussels sprouts may go on ground cleared of early potatoes, or early varieties of peas. The Brussels sprouts require a longer season of growth and succeed best

when planted in May on their own piece of ground.

The soil which was dug and manured for the early potatoes will require no further applications of organic matter,

but if poor and needing assistance, the use of a complete fertilizer such as the "National Growmore Fertilizer" will assist growth. This fertilizer is of special value to those crops which have to stand the winter. Use at the rate of 2 oz. per sq. yd. before planting and fork it well into the surface soil.

Cabbage for spring cutting often occupies the site where onions have been grown and removed. These are planted in late September and October, and this is also a good time to plant red cabbage.

Brussels sprouts should be the first of these crops to be planted in the year. Summer cauliflowers are planted in May, together with summer and autumn cabbage, followed by the sprouting and "curd"-forming broccoli, the autumn cauliflowers, and lastly the winter cabbage, savoys and kales. The object should be to get these crops planted before the third week in July, for if planted after this time they are only partially developed before the cold weather sets in and active growth ceases.

The soil need not be dug over again after the early crops of potatoes and peas have been cleared, but it should be lightly forked over, levelled and made firm.

A suitable planting distance for the cauliflowers, broccoli and kales is 24 in. square. Brussels sprouts should be spaced 30 in. square. Spring cabbages are planted at a distance of 18 in. from plant to plant and from row to row, but winter cabbage and savoys need 24 in. spacing between

the rows. A garden line is the best means of keeping the plants in straight rows.

Hoe Frequently

Plant with a dibber, deep enough to bury the roots and stem up to the first leaves. Press the soil firmly round the plant with the dibber or by the use of the heel. The plants are often put out in dry weather and then need watering. Sometimes puddling is practised by placing soil and water in a bucket in which the plants' roots are plunged before planting.

If dry weather continues, the plants are watered each day until established and showing signs of making new leaves. If any plants die through bad planting or slug attack the gaps are filled with further plants from the seedbed.

Practise frequent hoeing of the soil between the rows. This not only prevents the growth of weeds but aerates the soil, thus encouraging continuous growth.

When active growth commences in spring, cabbage crops are occasionally given a dressing of a nitrogenous fertilizer, such as sulphate of ammonia, a small quantity being sprinkled around the roots without letting any particles fall on the leaves. After applying the fertilizer, it should be worked into the soil with a hoe.

From June to October the caterpillars of the Cabbage White Butterflies may be found feeding on the leaves. These should be picked off by hand and destroyed.

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